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House of Representatives

IMPROVE INSURANCE FOR OUR VETERANS!

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise today to urge support for improvements for veterans who have become disabled in their service to our country. I have introduced H.R. 4229, the "Fair Insurance for Disabled Veterans Act" to address this need.

First, when the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance, SDVI, began in 1951, it was intended to provide service-disabled veterans with the ability to purchase life insurance coverage at "standard" rates.

Unfortunately, these life insurance premiums are based upon mortality rates for 1940, while current standard life insurance policies have premiums based upon the 2001 mortality table. This means that service-disabled veterans are being charged premiums based on a table that is 60 years out of date. The Independent Budget, prepared and endorsed by many veterans' service organizations, has recommended that the mortality table be updated so that service-disabled veterans pay lower premiums for insurance. My bill would

provide insurance comparable to standard policies, based on 2001 tables.

Second, the VA provides mortgage life insurance, VMLI, up to \$90,000 to severely service-disabled veterans who qualify for specially adapted housing grants. Currently, this amount covers only about 72 percent of the outstanding mortgage balances because the maximum amount has not been increased since 1992. We know how the cost of houses has skyrocketed since then in many areas of our country! In May 2001, an evaluation by the Department of Veterans Affairs recommended that the coverage be increased to between \$150,000 and \$200,000. The Independent Budget has also recommended that the coverage be increased. H.R. 4229 implements those recommendations by increasing the maximum to \$200,000 to cover 98 percent of mortgage benefits outstanding.

I invite my colleagues to support H.R. 4229 to improve insurance policies for our Nation's service-connected disabled veterans.

